

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4918

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, CA

SUBJECT: QUEBEC PRIME MINISTER BOURASSA'S VISIT TO
FRANCE

REF: PARIS 25219

SUMMARY: THE QUEBEC PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO FRANCE
CONSOLIDATED THE RECENT RESTORATION OF GOOD, NORMAL
RELATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE GOVERNMENTS OF CANADA
AND QUEBEC. FRANCE AGREED TO GIVE ASSISTANCE TO
QUEBEC'S EFFORTS TO APPLY LAW 22 TO INDUSTRY AND JOINT
INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION GROUPS WERE ESTABLISHED. AL-
THOUGH DESIRED BY QUEBEC, FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN THE
JAMES BAY ENRICHMENT PLANT HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED BY
CANADIAN FEDERAL FEDERAL AUTHORITIES. END SUMMARY

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR THE U.S. AND CANADA
PONSOLLE TOLD US THAT THE DECEMBER 3 - 5 VISIT OF
QUEBEC PRIME MINISTER ROBERT BOURASSA SERVED PRIMARILY
TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION OF FRANCE'S
RELATIONS WITH CANADIAN FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL
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AUTHORITIES ALREADY WELL ADVANCED BY PRIME MINISTER

TRUDEAU'S RECENT VISIT (REFTEL). HE SAID THAT ALL PARTIES TO THE PARIS-OTTAWA-QUEBEC RELATIONSHIP NOW ACCEPT THAT FOREIGN RELATIONS SHOULD BE HANDLED SOLELY BY PARIS AND OTTAWA BUT THAT DIRECT CULTURAL COOPERATION BETWEEN PARIS AND QUEBEC IS APPROPRIATE AND DESIRABLE.

2. THERE WERE TWO PRINCIPAL MATTERS OF DISCUSSION, PONSOLLE SAID, LAW 22 AND ENERGY. THE FRENCH READILY AGREED TO PROVIDE FRENCH LEXICOGRAPHERS, LINGUISTS AND OTHER EXPERTS TO ASSIST IN THE APPLICATION TO QUEBEC'S INDUSTRY OF LAW 22 OF WHICH FRANCE, OF COURSE, HEARTILY APPROVES. (COMMENTING PERSONALLY, PONSOLLE SAID HE THOUGHT LAW 22 MIGHT TEMPORARILY STEM THE ENGLISH TIDE SWEEPING QUEBEC BUT THAT WITHIN THIRTY YEARS, THE FRANCOPHONES WILL HAVE LOST THE BATTLE.)

3. ON ENERGY, PONSOLLE NOTED THAT DURING BOURASSA'S VISIT, CANADIAN ENERGY MINISTER MCDONALD POINTEDLY EMPHASIZED IN PUBLIC THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PRIMACY IN QUESTIONS INVOLVING NUCLEAR EXPORTS, A POSITION NEITHER PARIS NOR QUEBEC DISPUTES. HENCE DISCUSSIONS OF FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A URANIUM ENRICHMENT PLANT AT JAMES BAY WERE INCONCLUSIVE. ACCORDING TO PONSOLLE, QUEBEC HOPES FOR FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN THE ENRICHMENT PLANT PROJECT, BUT OTTAWA STILL HAS THE PROPOSAL UNDER STUDY.

4. THE FRENCH PRESS GAVE GOOD COVERAGE TO BOURASSA'S VISIT WHICH WAS NONETHELESS LARGELY OVERSHADOWED BY THE CONCURRENT VISITS OF CHAIRMAN BREZHNEV, AND PRIME MINISTERS WILSON AND TINDERMANS AND BY SPECULATION ON THE FORTHCOMING EC SUMMIT AND FORD-GISCARD MEETINGS. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT RECEIVED BOURASSA LAVISHLY, AND MUCH WAS MADE OF THE "SPECIAL TIES" BETWEEN FRANCE AND QUEBEC. FIGARO, HOWEVER, SUGGESTED THAT BOURASSA'S PARTICIPATION IN THIS WEEK'S MEETING OF THE FRENCH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THE FIRST TIME A FOREIGN HEAD OF GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN SO HONORED, WAS INTENDED TO COMPENSATE FOR THE PAUCITY OF SOLID RESULTS FROM THE VISIT, DESCRIBED AS THE FRENCH PURCHASE OF FIVE CL 125

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CANADIANS FOR FOREST FIRE FIGHTING AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION GROUPS FOR ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONICS, CHEMISTRY, PETROCHEMISTRY, MINING, FORESTRY, CONSTRUCTION AND COMMUNICATIONS, AS WELL AS THE PROMISE OF FRENCH TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR GALLICIZING QUEBEC'S INDUSTRY.

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